

Presentation of the Dossier

With great pleasure we do deliver to the readers of the Journal *Caminhando* a dossier which mentions and interprets the recent writings of Milton Schwantes. The items shown in this review are based especially in studies produced by Milton Schwantes for the Graduate Program of Religious Studies of the Methodist University in Sao Paulo (UMESP) between 2009 and 2011 and not yet published.

This dossier aims not only to pay tribute to the beloved teacher and friend Milton Schwantes, but also to guarantee that his projects of biblical interpretation developed in recent years during his teaching at the Umesp in the future will be considered. In his last writings, he expressed, with insistence, a new hermeneutic perspective in addressing the First Testament, including advanced research on the topic messianism.

It is fundamentally based on a hermeneutic deconstruction of the classical theory of the literary sources of the Pentateuch, as well as an interesting review of the history of Israel, in line with the archaeological discoveries of the Ancient Near East.

Milton proposes that biblical theology is guided, as a starting point, by the biblical canon. Thus, the theology of the Torah constitutes the corner-stone of the literary set that is completed by the two other parts of the Hebrew Bible: Prophets and Writings. For Milton, the key question is how these three parts are organized theologically. So he sought to justify the possibility of a renewal of Bible studies focusing on the theology of the First Testament by a new approach to the Hebrew canon. This new approach takes the Torah as the basis for understanding the later development of the two other parts of the Hebrew Bible, Prophets and Writings. Understanding the narratives of Creation, as a kind of portal for the whole Torah provides for the theology of the First Testament a vision that entails the revelation in Israel with the revelation to all mankind and to all the created world. The emphasis, found from Genesis 1-11, is a hermeneutic horizon that enables to see creation as the embodiment of hope.

Although Milton did not develop a systematic perspective in the classical sense, he showed a hermeneutics sense that allowed him to develop the fundamental lines of the First Testament. It is important to say that he was concerned to leave his last courses given in a written form which he understood as a first draft of this new theology of the First Testament.

We speak of Milton as an exegete and theologian *par excellence*, but little is mentioned about his pastoral qualities. Ademar José Kaefer describes in his article a facet of Milton's personality as pastor. He was not thrilled with the achievements of mighty kings, but was concerned with the oppressed people: *And the victims, where are they? Where are the young people who died in wars to ensure the megalomaniac dreams of kings? Where is that people had to pay taxes to keep abusive wars? Where are the women raped by war? The mothers, widows who mourn the death of their children and their husbands? Where are the orphans of the wars? Where is their God?* For Milton, just reading and memorizing the Bible meant only to do the half job. The pastor need to read the sacred text with a lot of extra attention and sensitivity to find in it the little and forgotten ones of history.

Facing health trouble, Milton was very eager to prepare his lessons in a written form. In these writings, Milton focused on biblical theology as really included in the daily life. For him, this was the only way how theology may achieve its sense and its materiality.

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